

**MARYLAND GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON
ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN AFFAIRS**

Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, April 15, 2008

Time: 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Place: State Center
Conference Room
301 W. Preston Street
Baltimore, Maryland

Present: Chair Anwer Hasan, Iman Awad, Bilal M. Ayyub, Zahid H. Bukhari, Riad Dakheel, Dorreya (Didi) R. Elmenshawy, Miriam Galston, Irma Hafeez, Sayed Hassan, Majid R. Mirza, Ibrahim Uyar

Absent: Murat Ozer, Khalil A. Zaied, Yonathan (Yoni) Zohar

Staff Present: David Lee, Agnes Smith, Alfreda Gill, Tony Bridges, Izzy Patoka, Susan Driscoll

Guest Speakers: Cassie Motz, Deputy Counsel to Governor Ethics, Duties and Responsibilities, Luwanda Jenkins, Special Secretary Governor's Office of Minority Affairs, Mendy Nitsch, Director of International Affairs Maryland Office of the Secretary of State, Rafael Regales, Special Assistant Office of the Assistant Secretary Division of Workforce Development Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulations

I. Call to Order and Greetings

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. by Chair Anwer Hasan. Chair Hasan welcomed the Commissioners, staff and guest. Chair Hasan said that he was thankful to have the Middle Eastern Commission formed at the State level. He thanked the Governor for his vision and leadership, Secretary Jeanne Hitchcock and Executive Director Izzy Patoka and staff for their efforts in bringing the Governor's vision to reality.

Chair Hasan also is thankful to Commissioners for taking the time to be a part of the Commission and to help out.

II. Commissioners Introductions

There were brief introductions from the Commissioners. After brief introductions, Chair Hasan introduced Mr. Izzy Patoka, Executive Director, Governor's Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI) to talk about the charge of the Commission.

III. Charge of the Commission

Mr. Patoka spoke on behalf of Governor Martin O'Malley and Lt. Governor Anthony Brown. Mr. Patoka thanks everyone in participating, the Commissioners and everyone taking part this evening in this historical event where the Governor has created a new Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs. This is an exciting time. Again, Mr. Patoka thanked everyone on behalf of the Governor and Lt. Governor.

Mr. Patoka informed the Commission that in the State of Maryland there are 19 agencies with secretaries. There are 7 Governor's coordinating agencies. The Governor's coordinating agencies have 2 primary functions:

- (1) Weave through the Masses of Bureaucracy
- (2) Coordinate the activities of initiatives that require more than one agency to work together.

The 7 coordinating agencies are:

- (1) Office for Children
- (2) Office of Community Initiatives
- (3) Office of Crime Control and Prevention
- (4) Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- (5) Grants Office
- (6) Office of Homeland Security
- (7) Office of Minority Affairs

Mr. Patoka informed the Commission that GOCI was created by Executive Order by the previous Governor in 2004. In September 2007, Governor O'Malley reaffirmed and defined the office through Executive Order for this administration. GOCI will house all the cultural and ethnic commissions across the State of Maryland.

Since that time HB782 was authorized at a vote of 132-0 in the House of Delegates and 46-0 in the Senate. The Office is now statutory. In the Executive Order it was noted that any future commissions will be housed under GOCI.

The Governor has certain priorities which is economic development, workforce development and community development.

The Executive Order states that the Commission will have 21 members. Secretary Hitchcock is working on that right now. The Commission duties are to be:

- (1) An advisory body to the Governor
- (2) The Commission will identify needs or problems affecting Middle Eastern Americans
- (3) The Commission will help with outreach
- (4) The Commission will review and comment on any proposed federal, State or local legislation

Mr. Patoka notified the Commission to define what path it will take. With the make-up of the Commission the Governor has great expectations of this Commission. This Commission is very diverse. The Governor talks about One Maryland. How the diversity of Maryland is not a liability but it's strength.

IV. Commission Orientation

Cassie Motz, Deputy Counsel to Governor

Ms. Motz spoke on ethnics. There is a State Ethnic Commission. This particular board because it is created by Executive Order signed by the Governor and not passed through the General Assembly is not officially subject to the State Ethnic Laws. The Executive Director Mr. Robert Hahn wanted her to pass on that he would be willing to talk to the Commission and urges the Commission to abide by the State Ethnic Laws for credibility. The more ethnical and above board the Commission is, the more the Commission will be taken seriously in the official message. Ms. Motz spoke briefly on the Guidelines for Commissions:

- (1) The Commissioner will use title for official duties only. The title should be used only when you are representing the Governor
- (2) The Commissioner may not be involved in any business or interest where a relative or he/she have employment
- (3) The Commissioner should not accept any gifts from anyone. This is to altogether avoid someone saying that the Commission can be brought or bribed
- (4) The Commissioner cannot disclose any confidential information acquired about anyone

Wendell Sutton, Governor's office of Minority Affairs

Mr. Sutton was here on behalf of Special Secretary Lawanda Jenkins. Mr. Sutton spoke about some things the Commission can expect. One of the main duties of the Commission is outreach. It can be done in a formal or informal setting. Outreach is a purpose that all commissioners are expected to participate in. The outreach can be a small private function, approach people face to face, block party, fair, festival, etc. The Commission needs to develop good and friendly relationships with other

commissions as well as the community. It is best that everyone work in concert. Mr. Sutton again welcomed the Commission and informed them that the Minority Affairs Office is here to work with the Commission with small business or with any other projects that the Commission thinks they can help with.

Mendy Nitch, Director of International Affairs, Maryland Office of the Secretary of State

Ms. Nitch informed the Commission that her office has two mandates.

- (1) Help to administer the Governor's sub-cabinet on international affairs
- (2) The Maryland Sister States Program

Maryland has 8 active States all over the world. The Maryland Sister State Program is in China, Japan, South Korea, Poland, Russia, Mexico, Brazil and Africa. Recently in Liberia, there were over 200 citizens who volunteered to help with the State's program.

Rafael Regales, Special Assistant, Office of the Assistant Secretary Division of Workforce Development, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulations

The Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulations is an office of agencies. They have touched every Marylander in some way. Mr. Regales works for the Division of Workforce Development which is the new Americans navigator. He is to make sure that immigrants are able to have access to the workforce development system. This division helps immigrants find jobs and be a part of Maryland society.

Other divisions of DLLR are:

- (1) Labor & Industry – makes sure businesses take care of their employees
- (2) Division of Financial Regulations – all financial institutes
- (3) Occupation and Special Licensing
- (4) Division of Unemployment Insurance – helps when someone is temporary unemployed. Unemployment insurance is paid out of employees paychecks
- (5) Division of Racing – regulates racing industry

Mr. Patoka informed the Commission that one of the passions of Secretary Perez, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulations is to address under employment. Under employment is someone who comes to this country with an advance degree and is working below where they ought to be. Studies show that limited English proficiency is one of the reasons. There is a new Americans initiatives being discussed and reviewed. Ways are being sought to correct this so that persons can get jobs at the level of their education. There is a shortage especially in the medical profession.

V. Future Direction of Commission

Chair Hasan informed Commission that the agenda will be provided in advance of meetings. The Commission will work with Ms. Susan Driscoll in regards to speakers, etc.

The Commission meetings will be conducted in an orderly process with public participation. The Commission plan to have meeting in all counties.

Chair Hasan suggested that instead of a meeting on June 26th that a retreat is done.

The Commission need to decide on what committees to have set-up. The Commission wants to look into having some sought of youth committee. The Commission wants a program that can be introduced to school level. Also the Commission would like an exchange program with Embassies.

The Commission would like more information on statistics in Maryland. The Commission will solicit the help of the Department of Planning at the Department of Human Resources with mapping. Information needs to be gathered on Middle Eastern community. Where does community go to pray, etc.

The Commission needs to establish long term and short term goals. One long term goal is to have a Middle Eastern Chamber of Commerce.

The Commission feels that more university students needs to be appointed to the Commission, as well as more mothers.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.